

## Shadow of the Glen

### 1

TRAMP {Outside.} Good evening to you, lady of the house.

NORA

Good evening, kindly stranger, it's a wild night, God help you, to be out in the rain falling.

TRAMP It is, surely, and I walking to Brittas from the Aughrim fair.

NORA Is it walking on your feet, stranger?

TRAMP On my two feet, lady of the house, and when I saw the light below I thought maybe if you'd a sup of new milk and a quiet decent corner where a man could sleep {he looks in past her and sees the dead man.} The Lord have mercy on us all!

NORA It doesn't matter anyway, stranger, come in out of the rain.

TRAMP {Coming in slowly and going towards the bed.} Is it departed he is?

NORA It is, stranger. He's after dying on me, God forgive him, and there I am now with a hundred sheep beyond on the hills, and no turf drawn for the winter.

TRAMP {Looking closely at the dead man.} It's a queer look is on him for a man that's dead.

NORA {Half-humorously.} He was always queer, stranger, and I suppose them that's queer and they living men will be queer bodies after.

TRAMP Isn't it a great wonder you're letting him lie there, and he is not tidied, or laid out itself?

NORA {Coming to the bed.} I was afeard, stranger, for he put a black curse on me this morning if I'd touch his body the time he'd die sudden, or let any one touch it except his sister only, and it's ten miles away she lives in the big glen over the hill.

TRAMP {Looking at her and nodding slowly.} It's a queer story he wouldn't let his own wife touch him, and he dying quiet in his bed.

NORA He was an old man, and an odd man, stranger, and it's always up on the hills he was thinking thoughts in the dark mist. {She pulls back a bit of the sheet.} Lay your hand on him now, and tell me if it's cold he is surely.

TRAMP Is it getting the curse on me you'd be, woman of the house? I wouldn't lay my hand on him for the Lough Nahanagan and it filled with gold.

NORA {Looking uneasily at the body.} Maybe cold would be no sign of death with the like of him, for he was always cold, every day since I knew him,—and every night, stranger,—{she covers up his face and comes away from the bed}; but I'm thinking it's dead he is surely, for he's complaining a while back of a pain in his heart, and this morning, the time he was going off to Brittas for three days or four, he was taken with a sharp turn. Then he went into his bed and he was saying it was destroyed he was, the time the shadow was going up through the glen, and when the sun set on the bog beyond he made a great lep, and let a great cry out of him, and stiffened himself out the like of a dead sheep.

TRAMP {Crosses himself.} God rest his soul.